UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22186
1 February 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 31 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MAURITANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the statement made to the national and international press on 31 January 1991 by the Mauritanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation.

"I wanted to see you to share with you our feelings about what is happening in the Gulf two weeks after the outbreak of war.

"We are now in the fourteenth day of continuous day and night attacks on Iraqi territory by all airborne means (aircraft and long-range missiles).

"The media report, and eyewitnesses confirm, that these attacks have led in all regions of Iraq to the destruction of many scientific, cultural, social and economic infrastructural facilities, as well as to the deaths of a substantial number of civilians, including women, children and the elderly.

"Throughout the world, including in countries which are permanent members of the Security Council, voices are being raised in denunciation of this departure from the objective initially defined by the Council itself.

"The military operation has turned into an enterprise designed to break Iraq's human and material foundations.

"The slaughter of women, children and the elderly as well as the destruction of the archaeological heritage and holy places are, to say the least, contrary to the principles of democracy, the international rule of law and respect for human rights.

"I should like also to recall the sufferings experienced since 15 January by the citizens of Palestine, subjected to a continuous curfew in their occupied homeland.

"In the face of this harrowing ordeal and the inherent risks of its extension, with the threat of further destruction and loss of human life, we draw the attention of all peace-loving peoples who espouse the cause of freedom to the seriousness of the present situation.

"We further call on the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities so that it will remain a tool for peace and stability instead of serving as a means for legitimizing war and destruction.

"We also greatly appreciate the efforts being made by certain Islamic and non-aligned countries, as well as by men of good will throughout the world, to put an end to the war and find a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis and the whole range of problems in the Middle East, foremost among them the question of Palestine."

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohamedou OULD MOHAMED MAHMOUD
Permanent Representative